

paean churches.⁷ And in addition, as is

⁷ Joseph Scaliger, *De Emendatione Temporum*, Francofurt, 1593, 105.

well known, the so-called Christian passover in early times had many variations that were founded upon many different cycles, so that the feast in Europe was commonly observed in a different month and on another date from that of the Johannine passover, as represented by Scaliger.

These circumstances may account in part for the appearance of a general name for the paschal period in the first century. Nevertheless, the phrase *τὰ ἄζυμα* without any doubt had origin from OT practice, whose primitive laws stipulated that unleavened bread should be eaten with the roasted lamb on the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month.⁸

⁸ Ex. 12: 8, 18; 23: 18; Num. 9: 3, 11; Deut. 16: 3. Thus Philo: "The victim is then slaughtered and dressed for the festal meal which befits the occasion. The guests assembled for the banquet have been cleansed by purificatory lustrations, and are there . . . to fulfil with prayers and hymns the custom handed down by their fathers. The day on which this national festivity (*τῆς πανδήμου εὐχίας*) occurs may very properly be noted. It is the 14th of the month. . . ." (Vol. VII, *Special Laws II*, XXVII, 149. Tr. Colson, 1937, Loeb Classics.)

Such was the case with the passover both for the clean, and for the unclean.⁹

⁹ Num. 9: 11.

Ceremonial regulation made sharp distinction between the passover itself, which Jehovah called "my sacrifice," and "my feast,"¹⁰ and which was also

¹⁰ Ex. 23: 18.

termed the "feast of the passover,"¹¹

¹¹ Ex. 34: 25.

and the consecrated unleavened-bread festival of the fifteenth, which Christianity understood to be the symbol of purity,¹² and not a sin-offering.

¹² 1 Cor. 5: 7.

In harmony with this special significance, OT law ascribed to each of these feasts a different date, commanding that the passover was to be slain at sunset,¹³

¹³ Deut. 16: 6. Cf. Gesenius שמש on this text—interpreted as sunset.

"in the fourteenth day . . . between the two evenings;"¹⁴ but that on the fif-

¹⁴ Lev. 23: 5.

teenth day of the same month was to be the "feast of unleavened bread."¹⁵

¹⁵ Lev. 23: 6; Num. 28: 17.

This *fifteenth-day* feast, therefore, was not the passover festival, according to OT command, and could not consistently coincide with the eating of the paschal sin-offering, because it (the feast of the fifteenth) was accompanied by a prescribed sin-offering of its own.¹⁶ But

¹⁶ Num. 28: 22.

under Talmudic law, "the fifteenth day of Nisan was the first day of the Passover,"¹⁷ and the fourteenth as such is

¹⁷ A. W. Streane, *Translation of the Treatise Chagigah*, Cambridge, 1891, 36 n.

no longer observed.

It is commonly understood that the fourteenth of the first Jewish month was an ordinary day—one on which a man could buy and sell, and work. But it was also a day, as Philo puts it, on which each Israelite household became the symbol of a temple,¹⁸ where the offerer

¹⁸ Philo, Vol. VII, *Special Laws II*, xxvii, 145. 1937. (Loeb Classics.)

brought his innocent paschal sacrifice to Jehovah as a substitute offering for sin, and where the blood was originally brushed upon the lintel with hyssop,¹⁹

¹⁹ Ex. 12: 22; Heb. 11: 28.

instead of being sprinkled upon an altar. On the contrary, the fifteenth was set apart as a holy day because, as is obvious, the entire camp of Israel had thereupon become free from the leaven of sin, and hence was commanded to keep a feast of purity for seven days.²⁰ But

²⁰ Ex. 12: 15; 23: 15; Num. 28: 17.

not, however, without customary atonement through the sacrifice of the special sin-offering, which was eaten by the priest in the holy place.²¹

²¹ Num. 28: 22; Lev. 6: 25, 26. Ant. III.x. 5.

The lesson for the fourteenth day was impressive. It was for the individual as Philo implies. Thus once a year an Israelite was specially reminded that atonement through sacrifice could be made at his own door,²² though in sight

²² Regarding "private altars:" Philo, Vol. VII, *Special Laws II*, xxvii, 145, 146, 148. 1937. Loeb. Maimonides, *De Sacrificiis Liber*, tr. Compiegne de Veil. Londini, 1683, 4. Ant. XVII. ix. 3; B.II.ii.3. Edward Greswell, *Dissertations*, Vol. I, Oxford, 1830, 80. Joseph Klausner: "According, however, to an earlier ruling, which held good among the priestly party almost to the close of the period of the Second Temple, the Passover was regarded as a private sacrifice, and one which might not abrogate the Sabbath rules."—*Jesus of Nazareth, His Life, Times, and Teaching*. Tr. by Herbert Danby. New York, 1925, 326.

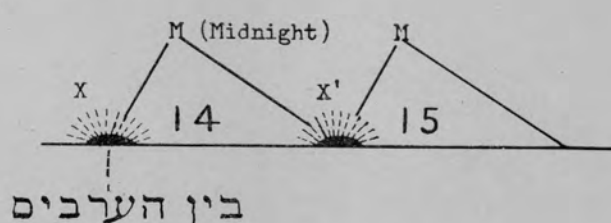
of the temple. Along with the sacrificial meal was to be eaten the unleavened bread representing purity and truth. But the contrasting sacrifices of the fifteenth day were always offered in the temple court, and depicted the consecration of the entire Israelite assembly—a holy convocation—to which the special burnt offerings are witness.²³ The spirit-

²³ Num. 28: 18 f.

ual character of these two feasts necessarily demanded two wholly different

Italics

dates, and it is as essential to demonstrate the calendar difference between them as to state the symbolic difference. The following diagram illustrates:



Three time specifications relate to the passover sacrifice: (1) in the fourteenth day; (2) at sunset; and (3) בין הערבים. Obviously, the time X, at the beginning of the fourteenth, is the only period where all three stipulations could meet. At X', the whole paschal ceremony—for the individual—would occur on the fifteenth, a holy feast for the entire camp!

Pentateuchal application of the dual phrase בין הערבים is in harmony with the foregoing interpretation. This festal term is found nine times in the books of Moses,²⁴ and corresponds to a limited

²⁴ Cf. Outline, ref. 17.

sacrificial period between two adjacent days. This two or three hour interval was called "the time of the evening oblation."²⁵ It began at the ninth hour

²⁵ Dan. 9: 21.

of the Jewish day, but was also reckoned as the actual ending of the day,²⁶ and at

²⁶ Ant. VI.ix.3; III.x.1. B.

this time the worshipers were kneeling in prayer without the temple.²⁷ This

²⁷ Luke 1: 10.

period was continued by Christianity as the hour of prayer.²⁸ Anciently in this

²⁸ Acta 3: 1; 10: 30.

interval (1) the lamb for the evening burnt offering was sacrificed;²⁹ (2) the

²⁹ Num. 28: 4.

evening incense was burned and the lamps lighted;³⁰ and (3) annually the

³⁰ Ex. 30: 8; Ant. III.viii.2.

paschal lamb was slain at sunset.³¹

³¹ Deut. 16: 6. Cf. Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, New York, 1925, 326. For sunset sacrifice among Karaites, Samaritans and Falashas: Adrian Reland, *Antiquitates Veterum Hebraeorum*, Batavia, 1717, 275. *Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement*, London, January, 1902, 82. Chwolson also proves from the Targumim and the Talmudic literature that in the usage of the later times בין הערבים did not mean the same space of time as is fixed by the recognized Halcha—the afternoon—but was used as the synonym of בין השמשות. *Das Letzte Passamahl Christi*, Leipzig, 1908, 37, 157 ff.

These acts of worship by both people and priest pointed toward the beginning of a new day. The burnt sacrifice represented consecration of the nation for the ensuing night;³² the burning lamps

³² Thus Philo, "for the benefactions of the night." (Vol. VII, *Special Laws* I, xxxv, 169. Tr. Colson, 1937. Loeb Classics.)

gave light for approaching darkness; the sinking sun manifestly date the new day—not the old. It was therefore an event of calendar significance when the paschal lamb was slain in בין הערבים at sunset; and the offering unquestionably must have been dated with the new day—either just begun, or about to begin. And this new day, according to the Pentateuch, Philo, and Josephus, was the fourteenth of the first Jewish month.³³

³³ Cf. ref. 8, and Ant.II.xiv.6, which also dates the paschal feast on the fourteenth.

Consequently, the slaying of the paschal lamb on the Jewish fourteenth could occur only at sunset *ineunte* of the pass-over day, and still maintain its calendar and spiritual significance. On this account, the favorite conception that the national paschal lambs were being slain at the hour of the death of Jesus is both contrary to ancient Jewish law, and to the earliest known Jewish cycle as well—that which is based upon the commentary of Aristobulus.³⁴ Instead, the

³⁴ Aristobulus was a learned Jew of Alexandria in the time of Ptolemy Philometor, to whom he wrote a series of commentaries on Moses (*Eusebii Pamphili Chronici Canones*, ed. Fotheringham, Londoni, 1923, 221), in which he locates the paschal month in relation to the equinox, and describes the exact position of the paschal moon in relation to the sun (*Nicolai Nancelii, Analogia Microcosmi ad Macrocosmon, Sec. Pars.* Lutetiae Parisiorum, 1611, col. 1204). Anatolius of Laodicea based his paschal cycles upon the teaching of Aristobulus (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Sec. Series, Vol. I. New York, 1890, 319).

customary evening burnt sacrifice was obviously being offered by the temple priest. The ninth hour, when Jesus died, was three hours too early for the passover offering, according to Deuteronomic law, and the Talmudic law that times the offerings several hours earlier on a Friday afternoon,³⁵ was a later

³⁵ Herbert Danby, *Mishnah*, Pes.5.1; Sab. 1: 11. Oxford, 1933.

redaction. As recent as 200 A.D., the Mishna acknowledges that the paschal lambs had customarily been slain at dusk.³⁶

³⁶ Ibid. Pes.5.10. Cf. Daniel Chwolson, *Das Letzte Passamahl Christi*, Leipzig, 1908, 163, 164.

The Greek text here is very revealing.

Let us attempt identification of the day on which Jesus died. *First:* With some, it was Wednesday; with a few, Thursday. But all four gospel writers call the crucifixion day *παρασκευή*.³⁷ And

³⁷ Matt. 27: 62; Mark 15: 42; Luke 23: 54; John 19: 42.

all four limit the term to the sixth day of the week—the day before the Jewish Sabbath.³⁸ Josephus likewise,³⁹ and also

³⁸ Besides the texts in ref. 37, cf. Matt. 28: 1.

³⁹ Ant. XVI. VI. 2. Greek text.

also the Syriac church and the Greek church.⁴⁰ Talmudic MSS, with a pass-

⁴⁰ Charles C. Torrey, "Date of the Crucifixion According to the Fourth Gospel," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. L, 1931, 234, 235. over on the fifteenth, further declare that Yeshu "the Nazarean" was hanged on the eve of the passover, and an ancient Florentine MS reads, "on the eve of the Sabbath."⁴¹ *Second:* Was this crucifix-

⁴¹ San. 43a, cf. Note.

ion Friday the ancient Jewish passover day, that is, the day of slaying the lamb? The Synoptists each report that disciples were sent by the Lord to prepare τὸ πάσχα, and in each instance one and the same simple conclusion is stated—"and they made ready τὸ πάσχα." In addition in these same texts, Jesus Himself is cited four times as speaking of the preparation of τὸ πάσχα. Moreover, John, according to Luke, was one of those sent to prepare τὸ πάσχα;⁴² and

⁴² Luke 22: 8.

when, decades later, John writes his account of the passion, he mentions a point of time immediately preceding the actual supper he had helped to prepare, and describes it as πρὸ δὲ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ πάσχα.⁴³

⁴³ John 13: 1.

Further evidence is also forthcoming from the fact that on Tuesday evening, at the end of the day, when all were seated upon the mount of Olives,⁴⁴ the

⁴⁴ Matt. 24: 3; Mark 13: 3.

disciples, all keenly intent upon the words of their Master, must all have heard Him say, "Ye know that after two days is τὸ πάσχα." This could not have been other than the sunset beginning of Friday and give place for all the episodes of passion week (cf. Outline). Matthew reports this incident, and Mark confirms it.⁴⁵ And, together with John

⁴⁵ Matt. 26: 2; Mark 14: 1.

12: 1, when, six days before, John had pointed to the ensuing Friday as τὸ πάσχα, we have accordingly at least fifteen different assertions by Jesus, John, Matthew, Mark and Luke that Friday of the crucifixion—Jewish time, from Thursday evening sunset to Friday at sunset—was the day of the passover, that is, the day for slaying and eating the paschal lamb. To this sacrificial ceremony the death of Jesus corresponds in meaning, and therefore necessarily in date.

Third: The passover sacrifice is the chief fact upon which astronomy must needs base the reckoning of the crucifixion, for OT law and custom supply the Jewish date to each undated NT passover, namely, the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month, and not the Talmudic fifteenth. And when the Synoptists obviously equate the paschal sacrifice of the "fourteenth" with the complex τὰ ἄζυμα, chronology has to accept the festal term chosen, and not confuse it with the OT "fifteenth," on which no paschal lamb was ever slain.

It therefore follows that after the death of Christ, first century changes in the Jewish sacrificial calendar were naturally accompanied by the appearance of festal terms which could not exist in the strict OT sense and its pentateuchal ceremonies. The discard of the slaying of the passover lamb on the Jewish fourteenth obviously gave way to the observance only of the ancient feast of the fifteenth, which came to be describe by both Christians and Jews as the "days of unleavened bread." With the Christian church, however, this remnant of the passover ceremony took on renewed spiritual meaning, but adopted a general terminology that was not as specific as that pertaining to the OT feasts, which were based upon three agricultural harvests—those of the "floor and winepress."⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Deut. 16: 13. Heb.

Pursuant of the argument thus far presented, several additional facts make it obvious and apparent that Matthew, Mark and Luke did not reckon Friday of the crucifixion to be the holy feast of unleavened bread of the OT "fifteenth" of the Jewish first month.

First: The Tuesday evening episode has already been mentioned that Jesus, Matthew and Mark each counted the passover as "after two days," which would be the sunset beginning of the Jewish sixth day of the week.

Second: Further evidence lies in the fact that each Synoptist—not John—reports the incident with reference to Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the field—ἀπ' ἀγροῦ—when he was compelled to bear the cross. If, in the minds of the Synoptists, Friday had actually been the sacred feast of unleavened bread, the "high day" of the festival, during which all work was anciently forbidden,⁴⁷ the Simon in-

⁴⁷ Lev. 23: 7.

cident would have at least provoked inquiry and comment. But there is no intimation at all by these NT writers that this circumstance was not in full harmony with Jewish law.

Third: In each of the two rival crucifixion years—30 and 31 A.D.—when in both cases the paschal new moon was passing through apogee—a Jewish fifteenth on Friday of passover week would shorten the moon's translation period one day, and thereby cause the month Nisan to begin a whole day before the moon could actually be seen.⁴⁸ It is altogether in-

⁴⁸ And so Fotheringham, for the year 30 A.D., dates the Nisan new moon phasis one day later than the Schoch calculation (*Journal of Philology*, Vol. XXIX, No. 57. London, 1903, 107).

consistent that Jesus should be represented by the Synoptists as consenting to a questionable form of calendar in the preparation of τὸ πάσχα.

Fourth: Hebrew scholarship would naturally see in the three Synoptic references—Matt. 26: 17, Mark 14: 12, Luke 22: 7—an allusion to the "feast of unleavened bread." Thus Delitzsch, Salkinson, Chowlson, and others. Both Delitzsch and Salkinson insert תּנּ in their translation of Matthew and Mark, although there is no word for "feast" in the original Greek. But such an interpretation distorts the chronology. On the contrary, NT scholarship presents τὰ ἄζυμα as its general term for the paschal season, the first day of which had literally come, according to the foregoing texts. Josephus goes further in calling the "fourteenth" the "day of unleavened bread." (Cf. ref. 5.) Thus we see this NT festal term in common use when the Gospels were written, and when Josephus wrote "Wars."

These facts seem more consistent than an emendation of Luke 22: 7⁴⁹ to agree with a

⁴⁹ Samuel I. Feigin, "The Date of the Last Supper," *Anglican Theological Review*, Vol. XXV, No. 2, April, 1943, 214 ff.

hypothetical translation of Matthew and Mark. Moreover, the records of Matthew and Mark include an indisputable earmark of the paschal nature of their supper, namely, the mention of the Hallel, which was only sung on one night of the year—after the paschal supper.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Matt. 26: 30 and Mark 14: 26. Cf. Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 1929, 104, 122, 329.

Fifth: If John and the other gospel writers had been discordant in their computation of the passover date, how does it come about that not only all the disciples, but Jews too from every part of the Near East, were in full agreement over the date of Pentecost, which they were observing on the same day. If there had been difference of opinion over the passover date, there was bound to have been variance over the date of Pentecost, which was reckoned from the offering of the wave sheaf on the sixteenth.

The foregoing circumstances lead but to agreement only with the gospel writers—not to disagreement.

II

And now as to other texts that are supposed to represent discord in the NT chronology. If in John 18: 28, for example, all had eaten the passover the night before, what was the "passover" which the Jewish priests and officers were still planning to eat? The OT answers this question.

The OT law is specific with regard to its use of the word "passover," which does not always refer to the paschal lamb. Moses speaks of the passover of the flock,⁵¹ and the passover of the

⁵¹ Deut. 16: 2. צֶמֶד, a collective noun, *flocks, sheep and goats* (Gesenius).

herd.⁵² This same distinction is illus-

⁵² Ibid. בָּקָר, collective, signifying *oxen or cattle* (Gesenius).

trated in particular in the passovers of Hezekiah and Josiah.⁵³ In both feasts

⁵³ 2 Chron. 30: 24 and 35: 7, 9. Note the sprinkling of the blood in 30: 16, and 35: 11. The blood of the passover lamb was applied to the offerer's door in Jerusalem.

bullocks and oxen are mentioned, and in the passover of Josiah they are cataloged as "passover offerings."⁵⁴ This

⁵⁴ 2 Chron. 35: 7, 9.

special offering of the "herd" was a peace offering—הִנִּיחָה.⁵⁵ Philo mentions

⁵⁵ הִבִּינָה, signifying festal joy (A. W. Streane, *Chagigah*, Glossary. 1891).

it as the sacrifice τὸν σωτηρίου, signifying *deliverance*.⁵⁶ The peace offering had to

⁵⁶ Philo, Vol. VII, *Special Laws* I, xxxix, 212 ff. Tr. Colson, 1937. Loeb.

be offered in the temple, and the blood sprinkled upon the altar.⁵⁷ Further de-

⁵⁷ Lev. 3: 2.

scription is given by Maimonides:

On the fourteenth day of the first month, when the paschal sacrifice was offered, peace offerings were made at the same time: and these indeed in the same manner as all the peace offerings of the herd and the rest of the flock, large and small, male and female: this obviously is that which is commonly called the festal offering of the fourteenth day, for in this manner the divine law regards it, "Therefore slay the passover to the Lord thy God—of the sheep, goats and beees. . . ." ⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Moses Maimonides, *Tractatus Primus de Sacrificio Paschali*, c. dec. XII. Tr. Compigne de Veil. London, 1683.

Lightfoot also gives a similar account of the passover peace offering, and thereby explains John 18: 28:

The peace offerings for the solemnity of the time were called the Hagigah, and they were to be of some beast, bullocke or sheep. Hereupon in 2 Chron. 30: 24 and 35: 7, 8, there is mention of Bullocks and Oxen for the Passeeover; and in Deut. 16: 2, there is speech of sacrificing the Passeeover of the heard; which cannot be understood of the Passeeover that was to be eaten on the fourteenth day at even, for that was punctually and determinately appointed to be of Lambs and Kids, Ex. 12: 5; but it is to be construed of these peace offerings which were for the solemnity of the time. And this is that which Evangelist John calleth the Passeeover, when he saith, "The Jews went

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not into Pilate's judgement Hall, lest they
should be defiled, but that they might eat the
Passeover," John 18: 28. For they had eaten
the Paschall Lamb the night before.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ John Lightfoot, *The Temple Service as it
Stood in the Dayes of Our Saviour*, London,
1650, 162.

From Edersheim we have the same in-
terpretation as the foregoing with refer-
ence to John 18: 28 and its implied
peace-offering.⁶⁰ He adds that a *second*

⁶⁰ Cf. Albert Edersheim, *The Temple*, 218,
219. Hodder and Stoughton, New York.

Chagigah was offered on the day of the
feast of unleavened bread, and that this
was the offering which the Jews were
afraid that they might be unable to eat
if they contracted defilement. From the
Talmud we learn that the Chagigah of a
high holiday such as the "first day of
the Passover," was compulsory, while
that of the fourteenth was not.⁶¹

⁶¹ A. W. Streane, *Translation of the Trea-
tise Chagigah*, Cambridge, 1891, 36. Strack-
Billerbeck *Kommentar*, Vol. II. München,
1924, 837 ff.

The peace sacrifice, that signified fes-
tal joy, peace and thanksgiving for the
mercy and forgiveness of Jehovah was a
fit accompaniment to the feast of un-
leavened bread. Hence the absurdity in
the scene in John 18: 28, lies not in the
chronology, but in the fact that the ac-
tors were desiring to eat the passover
peace offering, but at the same time
were trying to kill the Author of peace.

III

In conclusion let us summarize the
various texts which are supposed to offer
so much opposition to harmony between
John and the other writers:

1. In John 13: 1, the beginning of the scene
is "before the feast of the passover"; but
after the supper—consistently paschal—another
feast is imminent (verse 29), which naturally
is the feast of unleavened bread on the fif-
teenth.

2. In John's expression "preparation of the
passover" (John 19: 14) occurs the precise
confirmation of Luke's statement that the feast
of unleavened bread was also called *Passover*.
John calls it such. At the same time he im-
plies that a passover was but the preparation
for the feast of the fifteenth, all of which is
consistent OT theology. And it should be re-
membered that John never employs the festal
term *τὰ ἄζυμα*.

3. In John 18: 28, as has just been demon-
strated, the "passover" yet to be eaten was
the passover peace offering of the Jewish *fif-
teenth*.

4. In Matt. 26: 17, Mark 14: 12 and Luke
22: 7, the "unleavened bread" mentioned is
not the *feast* of unleavened bread, but instead
Christianity's name for the paschal season just
then beginning, and a festal term in harmony
with OT law, and first century practice.

In the Johannine language of the fore-
going texts, emphasis is placed upon the
feast of the fifteenth which was immi-
nent—the "high day" of the Jewish
Sabbath. The fourteenth therefore was
then in progress. In the language of
the Synoptists, the emphasis is upon the
opening event of the paschal season—
the sacrifice of the lamb. The point of
time, according to the OT, Philo, and
Josephus, was sunset בין הערבים at the be-
ginning of the fourteenth; and this must
necessarily have been what Luke meant
when he wrote, "Then came the day of
unleavened bread when the passover
must be slain." The sunset beginning
of a new day had come—even the cru-
cifixion fourteenth.

The important texts that definitely
fix the chronology of passion week are
(1) the five παρασκευῇ references that
establish the day of the week; and (2)
John 12: 1, 13: 1, Matt. 26: 2, Mark 14:
1, Luke 22: 15—two Johannine and
three Synoptic—that point to death
Friday as the day of slaying, preparing
and eating τὸ πάσχα. This is the only
date to which the calendar can tie.

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